

# Lee McClure

COMPOSER – ELECTRIC FLAUTIST  
VIDEOGRAPHER

FOUNDER DIRECTOR  
ECLECTIX CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
ECLECTIX DANCE COMPANY  
NEW YORK CITY



photo: McClure (painting by Robert McChesney)



photo: Suzanne Kaufman



photo: Lenny Charles

## Lee McClure

Developing the music of Gershwin, Ravel, Weill, Copland and contemporary Jazz, Lee McClure is one of the most melodic composers in the last 50 years of classical music. His music is distinguished by unexpected turns of traditional harmony and a lyric integrity imbued with undercurrents of searching.

In 2019 Lee published his major works on Archive.org. A well categorized list of his works with links to recordings, scores, parts & videos is available at <https://www.eclectixnyc.org/WorksAndPerformances-withLinks.html> The links go to Lee's Archive page: [https://archive.org/details/@lee\\_mcclure\\_composer\\_electric\\_flautist](https://archive.org/details/@lee_mcclure_composer_electric_flautist) for viewing, listening, & downloads.

In 2016 McClure published his *Jazz Preludes for Piano*. Without improvisation, the 17 preludes are a captivating lexicon of Jazz styles that bring new life to the legacy of George Gershwin. (see link on pg2.)

In 1985 in New York City Lee founded the Eclectix Chamber Orchestra that has presented the music of more than 125 living composers including premieres of Earl Robinson, Ron Carter, Toni & Gordon Parks, and groups led by Dick Hyman, Bill Charlap, and Jane Ira Bloom. Eclectix has received criticism and been denied grants for championing new music that is not minimal or atonal. **The New York Times** has written: "Eclectix, a group dedicated to presenting melodic music in the tradition of Debussy, Gershwin, and Ellington performs in New York. ....Most of this repertory grew out of a tonal, melody-accompaniment tradition, and a lot of it by way of American popular culture."

JoAnn Falletta, conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, has written about Lee's *Symphony No.1* "I found it to be a really beautiful work! I look forward to studying it." Lee's classical works include two operas, symphonic, modern-dance and choral compositions. The first of his two operas with librettos by the Pulitzer-Prize-nominated playwright Ron Whyte is *Mother And Child*. It was premiered at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine (NYC). The Gregg Smith Singers premiered Lee's *Litany to the Holy Spirit*. One of Lee's major dance scores is *Suite from The Voyage* for two pianos. The Eclectix Chamber Orchestra's premiere of *Hiatus* was praised by **The New York Times** critic Tim Page who declared "it was probably the most distinguished piece on the program: the harmonies had bite and the musical ideas seemed both organic and Mr. McClure's own."

Lee's Jazz works include his arrangements of well-known Christmas songs created for his 2008 CD: *A Jazz Christmas Like You've Never Heard*. It was played on 40 radio stations in the United States and reviewed in **O's Place Jazz Magazine** by Oscar Groomes who wrote: "For sure Lee has managed to transform, twist and provoke our imaginations with this work. The music is great and the lyrics are familiar."

Starting in 1990, Lee began developing his self-designed electric flute for which he has composed an extensive repertoire for over 20 years. Playing a traditional silver flute into a microphone, Lee routs the sound through 12 processors and a sampler, which he controls with foot pedals during performance. This produces repeating echoes, deep bass, 3-octave glissandos, complex harmonies, plus drum samples that can be faded in and out. His major works for electric flute include Rock Adagio, Metamorphosis, and Through A Glass Darkly.

In 2007 Lee founded the Eclectix Dance Company for which he creates all the music on electric flute. He conceives scenarios, choreographic concepts, and design for the lighting and costumes. Principal works that the company has performed are Lonely Woman: New Orleans After Katrina ~ Danse Nebulae ~ Cerulean Narrows.

**Black Light** is the 2011 CD of Lee's electric flute trio with Barry Wedgle on guitar and Eddie Hall on percussion – featured track: Burnt Siena (link to album below). 2018 marks the 24th year accordionist William Schimmel has presented in concert duets composed and performed by Schimmel and McClure.

As videographer Lee has created unique jazz and classical music videos combining recordings of his compositions with photomontages of landscapes and starscapes that interpret the nuances of the music. They can be seen on Lee's Youtube channel (see link below).

Lee studied at the University of California Berkeley, the San Francisco Art Institute, and Berklee College of Music in Boston. His formal composition training began with a three-year scholarship of private tutorials studying Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre* at the Turtle Bay Music School in NYC. In 1979 he received his B.S in music composition from Brooklyn College (CUNY). A recipient of numerous ASCAP Special Awards, Lee's compositions have been performed by: Old First Orchestra of San Francisco, Saturday Brass Quintet and The Accidentals. He has received commissions from the Janet Gerson Dance Company, the King David Orchestra, and the Breve Trio.

Other major works of Lee McClure include: ♦Voice, his second opera ♦Elohim And Adam for soprano and orchestra ♦Cerulean Narrows for orchestra ♦Invocation for vocal octet ♦Ondine's Oasis for electric flute. As an author Lee was invited to present his essay The Separation of Art and Society at the Society of Composers Inc's 1997 national conference in Miami. At Touro College Lee designed and taught a survey course on American music.

Born in 1947 McClure uses his matrilineal name and is the son of the late Rev. Dr. Arnold B. Come, Presbyterian theologian, Kierkegaard scholar, author, professor, and president of the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California. At age 11 Lee began playing the flute in Basil, Switzerland, during his father's sabbatical.

#### Classical music – Opera & Vocal

**"VOICE"** – opera: baritone, soprano (with subtitles) (20 min)

<https://archive.org/details/OperaVOICEByWhyteMcClureWithSubtitlesSZ6cSRchZ34>

**Mother And Child** – opera: soprano, mezzo, alto

(with subtitles) (48 min)

<https://archive.org/details/OperaMotherAndChildByWhyteMcClureWithSubtitlesGtiSiKHZ0A>

**Litany to the Holy Spirit** – chorus and piano

(with subtitles) (14 min)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fx6NmVr\\_Gtc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fx6NmVr_Gtc)

**Elohim And Adam** – soprano, narrator, & orchestra (7 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StSz-D0I2IQ>

#### Classical music – Orchestral & Instrumental

**Symphony No.1 - Montage** – symphonic orchestra, electric violin, and Jazz drums (8 min)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDH\\_6k6yxjY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDH_6k6yxjY)

**Suite from The Voyage** – two pianos (11 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcWwvOLPo9Y&feature=youtu.be>

**Film Noir Memoir** – solo piano (5 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90ZRpnqZ1So&feature=youtu.be>

**Hiatus** – orchestra / video of LIVE performance (10 min)

<https://archive.org/details/HiatusForOrchestra>

**Cerulean Narrows** – orchestra (10 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIutj2OBm6E&feature=youtu.be>

#### Electric Flute

**Ondine's Oasis** – electric flute & percussion (with subtitles) (5min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRUCWBUj35Y>

**Through A Glass Darkly** – electric flute (5 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eejwDqkk-rA>

**The Leeward Islands** – Eclectix Quintet: electric flute, voice, guitar, bass, percussion (20 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNgLiMjIBXo>

**Permanent Violet** – Electric Flute and Guitar (4 min)

<https://archive.org/details/PermanentViolet>

**Magenta Suspension** – electric flute and guitar (5 min)

<https://archive.org/details/MagentaSuspension>

**Rock Adagio 1992** – electric flute (4 min)

<https://archive.org/details/RockAdagio1992IElectricFlute>

#### CD Albums

**Jazz Preludes for Piano, Book I & II**

2016 CD

Audio: <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/leemcclure2>

Score: <http://www.ebay.com/usr/eclectixlee>

**A Jazz Christmas Like You've Never Heard**

2008 CD

<http://cdbaby.com/cd/leemcclure2>

**Black Light**

2011 CD – electric flute, guitar, percussion

<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/leemccluretrio>

**Lee McClure Electric Flute**

2004 CD – electric flute

<https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/leemcclure>

#### Video - Eclectix Dance Company

**Danse Nebulae** – for electric flute & 5 dancers (9min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woztKoakgT4>

**Iberian Backbeat** – for electric flute & 3 dancers (4min)

<https://archive.org/details/IberianBackbeatEDCoVideo>

**Six excerpts** – Eclectix Dance Company

<http://www.eclectixnyc.org/EclectixDance-Video.html>

#### Website

<http://www.EclectixNYC.org>

#### List of all works with links

<https://www.eclectixnyc.org/WorksAndPerformances-withLinks.html>

#### Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5PFCRCX7OivIeBO1rMXJCHw/videos>

#### New Music USA web page

<https://www.newmusicusa.org/profile/eclectix-chamber-orchestra-inc/>

<mailto:eclectix@earthlink.net>

Lee McClure  
New York City

# The New York Times

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NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1986

\$5 inside

## Music: Eclectix! Group

By TIM PAGE

Lee McClure's "Hiatus" was probably the most distinguished piece on the program: the harmonies had bite and the musical ideas seemed both organic and Mr. McClure's own.

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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1989

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By BERNARD HOLLAND

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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1989

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## ARTS/REVIEWS

69

### Devoted to Melody

Eclectix, a group dedicated to presenting melodic music in the tradition of Debussy, Gershwin and Ellington, performs in New York.

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NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MAY 29, 1990

\$5 inside (beyond 75 miles from New York)

## Posthumous Premiere of a One-Act Opera

By BERNARD HOLLAND

Ron Whyte, who died last September, wrote the libretto for "Mother and Child," a new one-act opera that had its first showing at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on Wednesday night.

In "Mother and Child," a woman confronts the birth of a child without legs, with all the subsequent stages of fear, anger, guilt, reconciliation and affirmation.

Mr. McClure's music is, for better and worse, eclectic. It veers from Broadway to sentimental pop ballad to angry instrumental harmonies to a recitative style that at times implies total dissonance.



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*Potpourri*

**Erik Satie Mostly Tonal Competition**, a national search for emerging composers, is now underway; applicants should submit one to five scores of 12 minutes or less per piece, in any style so long as the composition is all or mostly tonal (for more details contact Lee McClure, Eclectix Chamber Orchestra, 311 W. 100th St., Suite 7, New York, NY 10025, 212/662-7685)

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HOME



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The New York Times

DANCE

## Dance Listings

By THE NEW YORK TIMES MAY 18, 2007



ECLECTIX DANCE COMPANY (Tonight and tomorrow night) This new troupe's debut program emphasizes improvisation. Music for electric flute is composed and performed by Lee McClure. At 8, New Dance Group Theater, 305 West 38th Street, Manhattan, (212) 566-2217; \$10; \$9 for students and 65+ (Anderson)

Links to Eclectix reviews  
followed by xerox of reviews

New York Times - Tim Page - Oct 20 1986

<http://www.nytimes.com/1986/10/29/arts/music-eclectix-group.html>

New York Times - Bernard Holland - Sept. 11, 1988

<http://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/11/arts/review-music-eclectix-performs-new-works.html>

New York Times – announcement - Eclectix - Sept 10 1989

"Devoted to Melody", section 1, part 2, page 49 (Timesmachine by subscription only)

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1989/09/10/issue.html>

New York Times - Allan Kozinn - Sept 10 1989

<http://www.nytimes.com/1989/09/10/arts/review-concert-the-eclectix-impetus-new-music-in-old-mode.html>

New York Times - Bernard Holland - May 29, 1990 (opera Mother And Child)

<http://www.nytimes.com/1990/05/29/arts/review-music-posthumous-premiere-of-a-one-act-opera.html>

New York Amsterdam News – Herb Boyd - June 3, 1995 (links to main site only)

<http://amsterdamnews.com/news/arts-entertainment/>

New York Times - Dance Listings – Eclectix Dance Company - May 18, 2007

<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/18/arts/dance/18dance.html>

# The New York Times

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NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1986

50 cents

## Music: Eclectix! Group

By TIM PAGE

**T**HE chamber orchestra Eclectix! (the exclamation point is part of the ensemble's name) presented a program entitled "Daring to be Tonal!" (the exclamation point is part of the name of the program) at CAMI Hall Monday night.

Tonal, yes; daring, no, and not really even very eclectic — hold the exclamation points. The whole issue of tonality seems to me a red herring: today there are as many successful composers working with tonal centers as without. If, say, an Elliott Carter, who has made a reputation for knotty, angular, atonal music, were to suddenly "rediscover" tonality, that would take a certain courage; it would, at the least, signify an esthetic reversal. But when young, untested, composers produce innocuous, prettified, commercialized fluff and then proclaim their "daring," it veers uncomfortably close to newspeak.

Still, if this was fluff, it was, on occasion, agreeable fluff. Mario Andreola's "Rebellious Dance" could have been subtitled "On the Trail Re-

visited" — it was full of catchy tunes, crabbed syncopation and unusual percussion effects. Rob Tomaro's "Tribe" seemed a pastiche made up of fifths and watery jazz. Although Regan Ryzuk's "Veil of Dawn" was overly sweet, the composer displayed a gift for orchestral evocation and simple, affecting melody.

Kenneth Laufer's "Three Light Movements" for flute and piano proved airy salon music, 1980's style, imbued with a certain energy and wit: Cécile Chaminade would have been proud. Thomas Wagner's "Sea Story" can be described as a piano concertino: it is pictorial, vaguely heroic in its utterance and might make an effective soundtrack. Lee McClure's "Hiatus" was probably the most distinguished piece on the program: the harmonies had bite and the musical ideas seemed both organic and Mr. McClure's own.

The conductor Yaacov Bergman made the best of a bad job, as did the pianist Peter Stern, the flutist Susan Eberenz and the Masterwork Youth Choir. The orchestra played dutifully, their sound marred by the desiccated CAMI Hall acoustics.



# The New York Times

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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1988

## Review/Music

### *Eclectix* *Group*

By BERNARD HOLLAND

With two brief exceptions, Friday's program by Eclectix at the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church offered music about other music. In keeping with its title, this new-composers group takes its styles where it finds them, but it does seem to be looking in a few specific places. Thus most of this repertory grew out of a tonal, melody-accompaniment tradition, and a lot of it by way of American popular culture.

The nicest example of this was Kenneth Laufer's "Old Mac" Variations for flute and piano — settings of the familiar barnyard tune full of unpretentious yet subtle humor. Mr. Laufer seemed to be acknowledging the French influence on postwar jazz with his extended chords, parallelisms and bitonality. Six piano pieces by Mark Finkelman made many of the same connections (with particularly deep bows to Poulenc). Mr. Finkelman played with a heavy, sometimes unsteady, hand, but his sentiments shone through.

The two exceptions noted above were more self-contained — Lawrence Widdoes's "... And a Time of Rain" and Joelle Wallach's "Organal Voices." The latter builds on a single four-note theme, and its instruments — vibraphone and bassoon — created a workable sweet-and-sour timbral connection. The Widdoes was a delicate single movement for flute and guitar. Its taste, inventiveness and richly varied movement set it apart from most of the evening's other music. Lee McClure's "Heat Theme II," also a piano piece, alluded to the bells, horns, drums and sirens celebrated elsewhere in music.

The two dramatized pieces were, I'm afraid, pretty thin stuff. Excerpts from Kathleen St. John's "Don't Cry for Me, Desdemona" made a nice little joke of bringing two opera heroines together (the other being Violetta). Added to the quotations from Verdi, however, the present composer's music was little more than empty fragments and flurries. The settings of George Edge's English texts, moreover, often sat awkwardly against the musical line. Another opera scene was "Let's Go Enforce the Law" by Michael Dutka.

The many players and singers included Susan Eberenz, William Trigg, Gines-Didier Cano, Regan Ryzuk, Mr. Laufer, Janis-Rozena Peri, Mary Kay Little, Amy K. Porter, Thomas G. Garcia, Eric Kinsley, Jay Barksdale, Steven Morgenstern, Jay Campbell and Mr. Dutka.

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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1989

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## ARTS/REVIEWS

69

### Devoted to Melody

Eclectix, a group dedicated to presenting melodic music in the tradition of Debussy, Gershwin and Ellington, performs in New York.

#### Review/Concert

## *The Eclectix Impetus: New Music in Old Mode*

By ALLAN KOZINN

Eclectix, a group that presents new music by composers of a decidedly conservative stripe, opened its fifth season with a program of songs, flute works and light jazz on Friday evening at CAMI Hall.

Given the intimacy of the hall and the consistent gentleness of the musical language, the performance had the feeling of a 19th-century salon concert. And generally, the playing and singing tended toward the homespun rather than the polished.

The most inventive of the vocal works were David Irving's pieces, which benefited from the smoothest and most attractive performances of the evening. Sally Munro, a soprano, and Graham Fitch, a pianist, gave vibrant readings of Mr. Irving's evocatively dramatized Emily Dickinson settings — "Morning," "A Little Madness in the Spring" and "I Dwell in Possibility."

Miss Munro also sang Mr. Irving's ornate "Ave Maria" with fluidity and subtle coloration, and the light touch she applied to "The Ostrich Is a Silly Bird" worked perfectly.

Two other groups of songs were sung by Susan May, a soprano. She

was heard at her best in "Ophelia's Mad Songs," a group of Shakespeare settings by Lou Rodgers, although in these the contrapuntal piano parts, played by Jerome Shannon, were invariably more interesting than the vocal lines.

Miss May also sang "Shelter This Candle From the Wind," Ivana Themmen's three-song cycle based on Edna St. Vincent Millay texts. Miss Themmen's settings could easily be mistaken for late-19th-century works; at times, their piano parts (which Miss Themmen played) had the rumbling, textured quality one hears in Edward MacDowell's sonatas.

Intimations of antiquity aside, the settings were sensitive and appealing, but demanded high notes — long stretches of them — that Miss May could not produce without strain.

The program also included three flute works. Marlo, a composer and pianist who uses only the single name, supplied "Meditation No. 3," a sweetly melodic, pastoral piece with a French accent. Kenneth Laufer, in his "Sonata Allegro Rag," found an interesting middle ground between ragtime and a contemporary fragmentation and reorganization of that style's traditional rhythms. And Lee



Suzanne Kaufman

Susan May

McClure's "As One" was an easygoing piece, full of the open, parallel harmonies that Claude Bolling used in his early jazz-classical crossover works.

The flutist Susan Eberenz played with a warm, rounded tone, but she seemed to be sight-reading, and her lack of engagement had a dulling effect.

The concert ended with three pieces for jazz trio by Tom Pierson, a pianist whose collaborators were Jairo Moreno, an expressive bassist, and Ray Marchica, a drummer.



# The New York Times

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NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MAY 29, 1990

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## Review/**Music**

### *Posthumous Premiere of a One-Act Opera*

By **BERNARD HOLLAND**

Ron Whyte, who died last September, wrote the libretto for "Mother and Child," a new one-act opera that had its first showing at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on Wednesday night. Rarely is the author the first matter of consideration in an opera review, but Mr. Whyte's life and this stage piece are inseparable.

Born with physical disabilities that led finally to the amputation of both legs, he was an active and successful playwright whose subject matter often centered on his own particular set of problems. In "Mother and Child," a woman confronts the birth of a child without legs, with all the subsequent stages of fear, anger, guilt, reconciliation and affirmation.

Although the piece is essentially a monologue, it is sung and acted out by

four women. In this version of Lee McClure's music, two cellos and one piano-four hands, conducted by Bill Grossman, form the instrumental component. The singers operate from a square, unraised stage space surrounded by bleachers. Props are minimal — a few chairs, tables, a baby carriage and the like.

•  
Mr. McClure's music is, for better and worse, eclectic. It veers from Broadway to sentimental pop ballad to angry instrumental harmonies to a recitative style that at times implies total dissonance. The high range of the singing parts often provided uncomfortable tests for these singers, but the impression of rough, unfinished vocal style is probably intended. The diversity of musical influences comes dangerously close to stylistic incoherence here. Could it be that the power of the subject simply overwhelms the music?

The nature of Wednesday's performance spoke to the opera's title in an unfortunate way, for this is truly an embryo of a production waiting to be born. Singers lugged their scores around the stage and periodically dropped all pretense of dramatic involvement to receive cues from Mr. Grossman. Diction, despite the most earnest efforts, left words to disappear into this huge space. Judi Silverman, Linda LoPresti, Holly Durniak and Cynthia Izzo took the vocal parts. Stephen McCabe was the stage director.

# NEW YORK Amsterdam News

Saturday, June 3, 1995

The new Blackview

## ARTS &

ENTERTAINMENT

### Toni Parks, a chip off the old block

By HERB BOYD

Special to the AmNews

**T**he old adage about the fruit not falling too far from the tree is more than apt when considering the artistic talents of Toni Parks. Like her father, Gordon, whose stellar versatility has been widely acclaimed, Toni is an adept photographer, a former dancer and a fine pianist and composer.

It was her musical gifts that were prominently showcased last Wednesday evening at Cami Hall. Excerpts from her song cycle "In Love," with lyrics by her father, were premiered and performed by vocalist Lisa Kirchner and pianist Antar Jones as part of the 11th annual Eclectix concert series.

Also on the program was pianist Roland Vazquez, vocalist Theo Bleckmann and bass clarinetist Gene Coleman.



TONI PARKS

A rather adventurous foray into the realm of improvisation by cellist Paul de Jong and flutists Lee McClure, the series' artistic director, opened the evening. Both musicians played electrified instruments, and their best moments occurred when de Jong settled snugly behind McClure's flute, which sounded like a bowed bass fiddle.

The duo's often lively performance stood in sharp contrast to the dark, brooding music of Parks. Several instances, particularly the spoken parts, seemed like Gordon's autumnal tone that suffuses his recent collection of paintings and poems, "Arias in Silence," providing yet another dimension in his daughter's music.

"If You Would Have a Star  
(Continued on Page 39)

(Continued from Page 23)

for Noon" was representative of this melancholic, forlorn mood that evoked a distant loneliness, a modern urbanscape almost devoid of hope. Kirchner's voice is not a big one, but her interpretative skills are formidable. Though there were times when her vocal range was challenged, the music for the most part stayed comfortably at mid-range and mid-tempo, not willing or caring to leap daringly over the experimental edge.

Given these excerpts, Parks' compositional style is modern

with a preference for harmonic subtleties instead of rhythmic or melodic invention. And these harmonic turns would be an opaque gray if they were given a color, which practically eliminated any opportunity to hear Jones' speed or virtuosity.

This segment of the program should have been called "Generations," since Kirchner's father is the noted composer, Leon, and Jones' father is the superb flutist, Harold. But the Parks were the relatives in the spotlight, and as always they brought a special intelligence and perspective in keeping with the Eclectix spirit.